

# Open House

## JSC's Scientific, Technical Information Center provides roadmap to 21st Century

By Patti Stockman

**W**hile many civil servants and contractor employees draw frequently upon the resources of the Scientific and Technical Information, or STI, Center to enhance their effectiveness on the job, many others in the JSC community have yet to take advantage of the wealth of information at their fingertips.

Next week, in conjunction with National Library Week, STI Center staff will host an Open House from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Tuesday April 15, in the Bldg. 45 annex. JSC employees will have the opportunity to become familiar with the vast array of resources and services available, tour the facilities, participate in on-line database demonstrations and challenge their library know-how through an information scavenger hunt. There will be displays and packets of information explaining the workings and resources of the library. Astronauts also will be on hand at times throughout the day to sign autographs. Prizes, awards and refreshments will be part of the activities.

"Any NASA civil servant or JSC contractor employee may register with the STI Center in order to use its services and check out materials," said JSC Librarian Sharon Halprin. "In fact, anyone who registers with the STI Center for the first time during Tuesday's Open House will be automatically entered into a door prize drawing."

The STI Center—known simply to some as "the library"—is more than just a repository of books and journals tucked away in Bldg. 45. In addition to loaning out books and documents, the STI Center and its satellite libraries provide in-depth research services, rush document delivery and quick information look-up services.

Almost 50 percent of STI Center information requests are received by phone and 25 percent by fax or e-mail. The remaining 25

percent of requests are from employees visiting the library in person. Requests cover a broad range of subjects.

"Whether you need to obtain articles or conference papers, locate information on payloads, determine the chemical properties of a substance, find the names of NASA X-15 pilots, or research a new topic, the STI Center can assist," said Janine Bolton, an information specialist in the main library.

Most of the STI Center's extensive collections of books, journals, NASA documents, technical reports, microforms, audio-visual materials and electronic information sources are housed in the main library on the first floor of Bldg. 45. Two satellite libraries focus their holdings on materials most relevant to the clients they serve, with courier service to the main library to facilitate resource sharing. The Medical Sciences Library, the oldest of the two satellites, is located in Bldg. 37 Rm. 183 and contains a large collection of medical related resources.

Information Specialist Sylvia Hu helped establish the second satellite, the Space Station Library, which opened in November 1993. Located in Bldg. 4 South Rm. 1718, this facility supports and contains documents from the Space Station Program, its contractors and international partners.

"While the station library may be small, it serves many customers, helping 10,546 walk-in customers and filling 21,617 requests in 1996 alone," Hu said.

Customers of the STI Center will find an extensive collection of conference proceedings and papers on aerospace, engineering

and related disciplines available electronically, in hard copy or microfiche.

When materials required by customers are not available in the STI Center or satellite libraries, the staff uses a nationwide database called On-line Computer Library Center, or OCLC, to identify other libraries or institutions willing to lend materials. In 1996, STI Center staff assisted customers in borrowing 20,000 books, standards and articles using OCLC and other information suppliers.

"The explosion of information available

through the Internet can be a blessing and a curse," Halprin said. "We fully realize the value of JSC employees' time and we pride ourselves on our rapid service response to customers' needs. If a quick Internet search does not uncover the information sought, employees should turn to the STI Center. Our staff has access to extensive resources beyond the Internet. We can locate information quickly that might cost someone else hours of exhaustive searching on the Web."

In the last several years, the STI Center has taken advantage of technological developments and established site-wide access to electronic databases, Halprin said. This has provided NASA employees with increased access to the most current scientific and technical information. More than 30 databases are available, ranging from aerospace and engineering, to Books in Print, to procurement regulations and product, company and manufacturer information. More databases will be made available in 1997, including the STI Center's

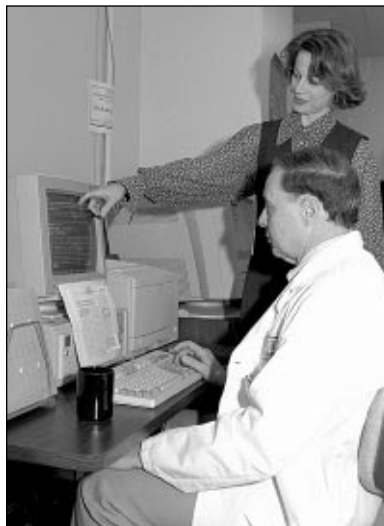
index of JSC documents. Many systems will become available through the STI Center's Website located on the Internet at [http://stic.jsc.nasa.gov/collections/STIC\\_home/doc2.htm](http://stic.jsc.nasa.gov/collections/STIC_home/doc2.htm)

Customers also may enlist research assistance from the STI Center's staff. The reference desk is staffed with professional librarians who can provide employees with a full range of information services. Every year, STI Center librarians conduct more than 20,000 searches.

Some reference requests stand out for either their complexity, urgency or criticality. Recently, supporting the Life Sciences Research Laboratories' investigation of the Feb. 23 fire onboard the Russian Mir Space Station, the Medical Sciences Library staff researched methods of analyzing components in smoke from electrical fires and burning foam insulation. STI Center staff have provided research materials to JSC scientists for use in their published articles. Materials research has supported design decisions for many space shuttle and space station elements, including the Autonomous Extravehicular Robotic Camera protective sphere and the shuttle seats for mission specialists.

Employees who are searching for a NASA document can find the information at the STI Center. Whether it is back year copies of JSC telephone books, Management Instructions, or JSC, NSTS, or SSP documents, they are all available from the STI Center and the satellite libraries. Online full text access to new JSC documents will be made available soon. The STI Center already maintains the JSC ISO 9000 electronic document repository, that includes the full-text of many approved ISO 9000 documents.

"In this age of information, the STI Center offers new technologies and a skilled staff to help the JSC community effectively locate and evaluate a diverse range of information," Halprin said. □



Above: From left, Delores Davis, a Scientific Technical Information Center's circulation staff member, helps Alvin Thomas of the Safety Reliability and Quality Assurance Directorate check out a book. Center: Carol Hoover, a librarian at the Medical Sciences library demonstrates the STI Center's electronic resources to Dennis Morrison of the Space and Life Sciences Directorate. Left: The STI Center staff is ready to assist employees with their information needs. Sitting from left are Janine Bolton, Laurie Caballero and Delores Davis. Standing from left are Larissa Mayer, Sharon Halprin, Kim Dismukes, Bob Loftin, Sylvia Hu, Sue Malof, Sasha Gilbert, Kim So, Shelly Lynn Pearson, Debbie Boles, Jeff McQuate, Sandra Ivison, Jane Hultberg and Aimee Patterson. Not pictured are Jenifer Egan, Mike Koester, Jennifer Lestourgeon, Janet Kovacevich, Carol Hoover, Annie Potter, Nancy Hutchins, Bobbie Candler, Ginger Gilbert, Kandi Frye, Patty Martin and Quinette Halley.